

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>HS2: request for access to SBDC owned land</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>Officer Management Team - Director of Services</b> <b>Prepared by - Head of Environment</b>

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To consider the request by HS2 (through its contractors) for access to South Bucks District Council owned land for monitoring purposes.

## **2. Links to Council Policy Objectives**

- 2.1 This matter relates to the sustainable environment and to protecting the District's heritage and future.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1 HS2 is currently undertaking extensive environmental baseline monitoring. This includes: archaeology, rights of way, traffic, soil, bird and noise monitoring along the whole proposed route.
- 3.2 HS2 has reported that they are having difficulty in securing suitable sites to undertake monitoring.
- 3.3 Both South Bucks District Council and Chiltern were contacted in September by Mouchel (on behalf of HS2) to seek permission to carry out preliminary non intrusive environmental surveys on Council land.
- 3.4 As regards SBDC, Mouchel has requested access to two sites in Denham: Northmoor Hill Woods and the tenanted caravan site at Wyatts Covert.

## **4. Discussion**

- 4.1 This request for access should not be considered in isolation but with reference to the overall SBDC response to the HS2 proposal and the negative effects it would have on the District if it were to go ahead.
- 4.2 In addition, at the time of the original request, the Council had not received adequate responses from HS2 on a number of outstanding matters including agreement for compensation relating to officer time and a mechanism for payment of costs incurred in responding to requests for information on technical aspects. However, some of these wider issues have to some extent now been resolved.

- 4.3 In terms of benefit to SBDC in allowing access there appears to be no direct benefit to the Council in doing so. However it has been implied by HS2 that it will be indirectly beneficial as the quality and quantity of environmental information would be improved and be more representative for the District.
- 4.4 Clearly there is a risk that HS2 might access the Council's land or contact tenants directly, regardless of a Council decision. It would for example be difficult to stop HS2 representatives from entering a public place.
- 4.5 CDC has discussed this matter with Buckinghamshire County Council which has received similar requests for monitoring on the public highway. BCC has in response requested risk assessments, method statements and details of public liability insurance prior to considering granting permission. At the time of writing BCC has not granted such access.
- 4.6 Members' views are therefore sought on whether we should allow HS2's contractors access to the Council's land.

## 5. Financial implications and risks

- 5.1 There are no specific financial implications.
- 5.2 There are no risks at this stage.

## 6. Summary

- 6.1 Members of the PAG are therefore asked to advise Cabinet whether HS2 should be permitted access to the Council's land.

<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	<b>Councillor D Smith</b>
<b>Officer Contact:</b>	<b>Chris Marchant 01895 837360</b> <b>Chris.marchant@southbucks.gov.uk</b> <b>Andrew Crow 01895 837259</b> <b>andrew.crow@southbucks.gov.uk</b>
<b>Background Papers:</b>	<b>None</b>